



FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

Over 1,100 people attended public outreach meetings sponsored by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) at seven (7) locations during summer and fall sessions in 2001 to discuss the Indiana Passenger Rail Initiative. The public response was overwhelmingly favorable of INDOT's plans examining potential high-speed rail service in Indiana. There were no detractors in any of the seven sessions. Surprisingly when the concept of using tax dollars to fund High Speed Rail came up no one raised any objections or concerns. Many of the attendees wanted to be assured that more public meetings were going to be scheduled throughout the INDOT planning horizon.

The public outreach meetings were a direct outcome of INDOT's *Rail Communication Plan*. The primary intent of the project was to conduct statewide public outreach meetings in seven (7) locations across the state to present plans and determine the level of public support for high-speed rail in Indiana. *Blalock and Brown, Inc.*, an Indianapolis based consulting firm, implemented The Rail Communication Plan.



Figure 1: Proposed Midwest High Speed Rail Routes

In 1996, Indiana joined nine other Midwest state Departments of Transportation (Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin), Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration to study the establishment of a 3,000-mile regional passenger rail system. Since then INDOT has conducted the Indiana Passenger Rail Study the Gary Indiana Alternative Rail Study, the South of The Lake Re-route Study, and is currently working on the Northern Indiana Routing Study. Each study identified alternative routes, examined challenges and opportunities,

and specified recommendations for future corridor routing decisions. This information was discussed at the public outreach meetings, and is available upon request from INDOT. INDOT's planning efforts have identified rail alternatives, and defined the next logical developmental stages, which would include preliminary environmental and engineering studies. By conducting these public outreach meetings, INDOT paused to

gather public input and assess the public's support for High Speed Rail to ensure that follow-up studies are in the public's interest.

Attendees at the Indiana Passenger Rail Initiative meetings represented a cross section of Indiana residents, business executives, industry representatives, federal/state/county/city government officials, and high-speed rail advocacy organizations. The attendance of more than 1,100 citizens exceeded expectations, as did the numerous public comments. Many individuals expressed an interest in future meetings. The meetings were held in public facilities located in Gary (7/24), Fort Wayne (8/2), South Bend (8/7), Clarksville (8/15), Indianapolis (8/21), Lawrenceburg (8/28), and Lafayette (10/16). The largest attendance was in Fort Wayne where approximately 400 people came out in support of making Fort Wayne a High Speed Rail stop and reinstituting Amtrak service to Fort Wayne.

There was media coverage at each meeting followed by several articles and editorials in Indiana newspapers. The newspaper headlines were indicative of the scores of people who attended the meetings including such statements as: *"Residents Pack Hearing to Support Service in City"* – Fort Wayne News Sentinel August 3, 2001; *"High-speed Rail Pitch Draws Overflow Crowd"* – Fort Wayne Journal Gazette August 4, 2001; *"Supporters Turn Out for High-speed Rail System"* – Elkhart Truth August 8, 2001. Several Indiana residents, local government, and business officials presented prepared comments at the meetings. In one case in particular, the Tippecanoe County Board of Commissioners actually adopted Resolution No. 2001-17-CM showing local support for enhanced passenger rail connections. The public outreach meetings also included information on the Indiana components of the Midwest Regional High Speed Rail System including: 1) Chicago through Indianapolis to Cincinnati and Louisville, 2) Chicago to Cleveland, and 3) Chicago to Detroit.

The public comments, questions and survey responses can generally be categorized as follows:

- High speed rail should be implemented sooner not later
- Elected Officials should support rail as they do highways
- Rail service should be affordable and accessible
- Crossing safety should be studied and solutions funded within any project
- More opportunities for public input should be provided
- Proceed – Why is it taking so long?
- There should be a stop in my town
- Rail alternatives cost less than highway projects
- Rail offers great economic development opportunities
- Implementation should include intercity connections and connections to other modes of transportation
- Restore and Improve Amtrak Service
- Rail is an environmentally friendly mode of transportation
- Rail transportation in the U.S. is inadequate when compared to that in Europe and Japan

Meeting attendees represented a cross-section of the population reflecting diversity at each of the meeting locations. Included in the audiences were representatives from local planning organizations, officials responsible for business development, local tourism organizations, local and regional elected officials, retired persons, and the media. As a whole the median income of the attendees was between \$30,000 - \$50,000, and many individuals had utilized passenger rail either in the US or abroad. The audiences were fairly balanced representing all genders, races, ages, and other socio-economic characteristics.

Questions and statements made in the seven public outreach meetings held by INDOT in 2001 reinforce the Indiana Passenger Rail Initiative study conclusions. That is,

- More and more people are interested in choosing rail as an alternative to driving or air travel
- The highway system in most major metropolitan areas is congested, and building more highways or adding additional travel lanes is a costly solution
- Air travel is less cost-effective for short to medium trips and is increasingly inconvenient
- Until recently, utilization of intercity bus service has seen a spiraling decline (the level of multi-modal feeder systems to support High speed rail was a concern expressed in each location)

This Final Report of the Indiana Rail Communication Plan is intended to document the comprehensive efforts that were implemented to engage the citizens of Indiana in public outreach meetings. The results of the public outreach meetings are described by location in the following chapters. There were 400 surveys collected from the 1,150 attendees; these surveys are available from INDOT. In addition to the surveys, a comment and question period was held at the end of each meeting. These statements are contained within the meeting summaries that follow,

Overall, the Indiana Rail Communication Plan successfully generated public awareness of INDOT's previous, current and future direction in developing the Indiana Passenger Rail Initiative – Taking a Bold Track Into the 21st Century.

The Rail Communication Plan

The Indiana Department of Transportation's *Rail Communication Plan* project was conceived as a means to gauge public interests in maintaining/enhancing the current Indiana passenger rail system and connecting to the designated corridors in the Midwest Regional Rail System. The Plan encompasses the process and methodologies used to ensure the statewide public outreach initiative was successful. The project mission links the intent with the desired output: *To introduce the general public to the Indiana Passenger Rail Initiative and the Midwest Regional Rail System, and generate discussion regarding applicable rail corridors in Indiana including: Chicago through Indianapolis to Cincinnati and Louisville, Chicago to Cleveland, Chicago to Detroit.*

The Rail Communication Plan also included the following tasks: 1) Research current passenger rail plans in Indiana and develop into presentation materials; 2) Conduct public outreach meetings in Gary, South Bend, Fort Wayne, Lafayette, Indianapolis, Clarksville, and Lawrenceburg; 3) Conduct and analyze the results of the Question and Answer sessions, and the Survey Questionnaire distributed during the public meetings; 4) Create and distribute public information to all parties addressing individual requests, and providing strategic information over the INDOT website; 5) Implement innovative means of reaching minority persons and/or individuals in low-income classifications; 6) Create a database of persons interested in transportation and passenger rail service in Indiana. Samples of the meeting notice, press release and information handouts are included in the appendix of this report. It is important to mention that the database includes over 1,800 contacts that were either already on INDOT mailing lists or added as they expressed an interest in being notified of activities relating to passenger rail in Indiana.

Methodology and Approach

The Rail Communication Plan encompassed the following major tasks: Research/Analysis of previously conducted rail planning/alternatives studies; Public Outreach Meetings with a defined focus on including low-income and minority populations, and creating a Database of Contacts. Each of these tasks is further defined below as are specific observations viewed relevant in identifying subsequent actions.

Research/Analysis

At the beginning of this process, the Consultant conducted an extensive review of the studies conducted for the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (*Strategic Assessment and Business Plan published in July 2000*), and the Indiana Department of Transportation (*Indiana Passenger Rail Study published May 2000*, and the *Gary Indiana Alternative Rail Study published February 2000*). The studies mentioned in this report can be obtained from the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Public Outreach Meetings

The Communication Plan called for seven (7) community meetings to be held. The locations were Gary (7/24), Fort Wayne (8/2), South Bend (8/7), Clarksville (8/15), Indianapolis (8/21), Lawrenceburg (8/28), and Lafayette (10/16). Over 1,100 people attended these meetings with the greatest number (400) showing up in Fort Wayne, and voicing overwhelming support for a High Speed Rail stop and Amtrak service to be restored to the Fort Wayne area. The attendance breakdown by location is as follows:

City	Date	Location	Attendance
Gary	7/24/01	Gary City Building Council Chambers 401 Broadway Gary, Indiana	125
Fort Wayne	8/2/01	Allen County Public Library 900 Webster Street Fort Wayne, Indiana	400
South Bend	8/7/01	Mishawaka Penn-Harris Library 209 Lincoln Way East Mishawaka, Indiana	110
Clarksville	8/15/01	Clarksville Public Library 1312 Eastern Boulevard Clarksville, Indiana	80
Indianapolis	8/21/01	Glendale Mall Library Indianapolis, Indiana	225
Lawrenceburg	8/28/01	Lawrenceburg Public Library 123 W. High Street Lawrenceburg, Indiana	60
Lafayette	10/16/01	Lafayette Depot @ Riehle Plaza 200 North Second Street Lafayette, Indiana	150

Press Releases, special mailings to individuals on the INDOT and Indiana High Speed Rail Association contact lists, website announcements, presentations at stakeholder advocacy group meetings, and word of mouth communication techniques were used. Together these methods yielded record attendance numbers that astounded most parties, and likely had some affect on the obvious show of support for passenger rail in Indiana.

The meetings were scheduled from 5:00pm – 7:00pm, portions of the audience stayed on after the close of the meetings to make comments and ask questions. The agenda included a formal presentation with a variety of Indiana and regional maps defining specific routes to points in Indiana and connecting states in the Midwest Regional Rail network. Information about general vehicle technology, passenger amenities and service levels was also presented. The meetings included a time for public comments and questions as well as final remarks from INDOT on the next logical steps that could be implemented.

The responses from attendees were overwhelmingly supportive of INDOT efforts. The attendees wanted INDOT to continue with plans for preliminary engineering and environmental studies. Comments from highway transportation industry advocates cautioned the audience to consider balance – meaning, no one mode of transportation should suffer at the hand of developing another. In addition to the comments raised, there were a number of questions about how to encourage elected officials to increase operating, funding, and political support for passenger rail transportation. Survey questionnaires were also distributed to each attendee. Attendance was across the board – varying ages, gender, occupations, and salary levels. Many attendees were either currently using passenger rail or interested in having it available as an alternative to the automobile or air transportation modes.

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Gary Public Outreach Meeting

July 24, 2001

City Council Chambers

The meeting in Gary, Indiana was the first of the seven (7) public outreach meetings conducted by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). Approximately 125 people attended including citizens, businesses, Mayor Scott King's office, the Environmental Law & Policy Center office out of Chicago, the Gary Public Transportation Corporation, and the Indiana High Speed Rail Association. It was not difficult to get affirmations for enhancing passenger rail service from the Gary audience because it already exists as an established mode of transportation in the Region. Currently, Amtrak and the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) provide regular trips to Chicago. NICTD service to Chicago is heavily utilized, and has expanded over the decades to support additional rail cars and peak hour service.



Figure 2: Corridors that were evaluated to determine the most cost effective and beneficial routing for passenger rail service in NW Indiana

Increasing concerns over air quality conformity, and skyrocketing traffic volumes on the major interstate routes through Northwest Indiana make it more commonplace to use passenger rail options. The Gary audience was particularly interested in the presentation that focused on the results of the Gary, Indiana Alternatives Study commissioned by INDOT to investigate various alternative routings through northwest Indiana for passenger rail service. Most of the questions related to proposed implementation strategies and schedules, types of station amenities, and specific public transportation connections that would be provided. In

addition, the audience advised INDOT to consider passenger rail options over increasing highway capacity,

examine implementing high-speed rail speed limits above 110mph, implement innovative railroad grade crossing safety measures, and examine alternatives to connect passenger rail service to the Gary Airport.

The audience also recommended that INDOT coordinate with Amtrak and the Illinois Department of Transportation to ensure existing passenger rail service be maintained. Local city planners and the Gary Public Transportation Corporation recommended that INDOT coordinate with the local transit agencies to ensure connections to intercity transit stops. The attendees were also particularly interested in participating in continued discussions with INDOT and regional planning organizations such as the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. Representatives of local businesses and government entities expressed their interest in INDOT continuing public outreach meetings as a means to promote public support for high-speed rail. Speaking on behalf of Mayor Scott King, Ben Clement (Director of Economic Development for the City of Gary) encouraged INDOT to present the results of the public outreach meetings to state legislators to show the level of support for high-speed rail in Indiana. Members of the Indiana High Speed Rail Association also recommended specific actions to move ahead with funding high-speed rail connections. This entity has been a long time supporter of high-speed rail, and had representatives present at all of the statewide meetings.

In addition to having modal choice, the Gary audience expressed the importance of linking passenger rail to the promotion of economic development opportunities in the Region.

Here are just a few of the recommended next steps mentioned by the Gary meeting participants:

- *We want to see funding for trains, not more studies*
- *Concentrate on assisting South Shore railroad in its upgrade. This may be the quickest and best way of demonstrating the benefits of high-speed commuter service.*
- *Connection between systems. Less roads!!!*
- *Coordinate with development of Gary Airport for stops in Gary.*
- *Focus on Chicago to Detroit and Chicago to Indianapolis.*
- *More union involvement and more Amtrak people at the meetings.*
- *Promote and publicize the concept of developing “grass roots” support. Get money.*
- *It is time you step up and take a lead role in developing a plan and funding for a complete and timely overhaul of the South Shore Line.*
- *Build track!*

The comments and questions raised at the Gary meeting are shown on the following pages.

Comments and Questions received in Gary, IN 7-24-01

Attendance: 125

1. Meeting participant expressed interest in seeing plans for trains traveling faster than 110 mph.
2. Participant discussed level of federal involvement in the design and implementation of new, grade crossing design options. Information provided about ongoing crossing safety work.
3. Feeder bus costs were discussed. Questioner wondered if cost for feeder bus system was included in the cost estimates for high-speed rail in Indiana? (Yes)
4. Speaker expressed a desire for additional opportunities for public input.
5. Speaker expressed a desire for the routes through Gary to include a stop at the Gary Airport.
6. Routing from Indianapolis to Chicago through Illinois was discouraged. Concern expressed about this alternative. INDOT expressed support for keeping route in NW Indiana.
7. Alternative funding ideas suggested, such as sharing costs with the freight railways when they receive benefits from track improvements.
8. When will the northern route studies be complete? (Summer 2002)
9. Large dollar amounts are spent on highways (i.e. \$250 million on just the Borman interchange). Passenger rail should be recognized for its importance and should also receive funding assistance.
10. In Florida and Texas the airlines fought against High Speed Rail, other states have a 6-lane highway plan, Amtrak has decreased service to Hammond. Obtaining support for high-speed rail will be very difficult with competition from other transportation modes.
11. (General Manager of GPTC) The Gary Public Bus System welcomes the opportunity to be more involved with INDOT as you continue to study and begin to develop potential routes. The GPTC wants to work with INDOT to explore the opportunity for feeder bus networks.
12. (Environmental Law & Policy Center) Sees HSR as a transportation alternative with virtually no environmental impact. A representative stated that HSR could bring business back to our cities and make urban jobs accessible to rural workers. According to their representative, Indiana trails the other Midwestern states in dollars currently budgeted for HSR.
13. (Indiana High Speed Rail Association) Compliments to INDOT on having HSR public involvement meetings. HSR is more fuel efficient and safer than alternative forms of travel. A HSR infrastructure that joins Indiana with other Midwestern commerce centers will attract business to the state.
14. Support expressed for increased communication and cooperation between INDOT and NICTD.
15. Coordination of train schedules through Chicago will be difficult. Needs to be closely examined.
16. Intelligent Transportation System technology could be helpful for successful High Speed Rail. Systems similar to those being deployed to assist with auto traffic might be utilized.

17. (Gary Chicago Airport) Speaker advocated ongoing cooperation and interaction between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and INDOT on HSR. Also suggested working closely with consultants such as HNTB.
18. The rail infrastructure is not being replaced. It is highly recyclable vs. concrete.
19. Track safety is a critical concern. Ongoing inspection and maintenance will be necessary to preserve safety of the rail bed and signals.
20. (Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission – NW Indiana MPO): High Speed Rail and potential new regional commuter solutions, (like the Valparaiso – Hammond – South Shore line) both compete for the same state and local funds. Separate funding sources will likely be necessary.
21. The roads are still required for the transportation of physical goods.
22. People seem to have a desire to drive, to not give up the freedom of the automobile. It seems that there should be an effort to re-romanticize train travel. Economic benefits of HSR should be presented to help spark more public support.
23. The cost of a ticket is important, the number of riders is more important. More riders are more important than profit. Highway congestion is increasingly an issue. High Speed rail provides an important alternative, especially in areas with extreme roadway congestion.
24. The NE corridor of the United States is a huge train success story.
25. Wisconsin says they will be up and running with HSR within three (3) years. Virginia is investing in the freight rail system as a method to move semis off the road. We need a different freight option for the trucks that use the Borman. Obtaining money for high speed rail is very difficult in Indiana. Money can be found for highway work. We need to do the same to fund passenger rail improvements.
26. (Gary Division of Economic Development) Mayor King supports HSR.

Fort Wayne Public Outreach Meeting

August 2, 2001

Allen County Public Library

The Allen County library meeting room was filled to capacity with approximately 400 people attending. The audience clearly communicated an interest to see passenger rail service restored to Fort Wayne, and connected to such cities as Chicago, Indianapolis, Cleveland and Detroit. A number of Fort Wayne elected officials and business representatives attended the meeting. Major employers and economic development advocates repeatedly mentioned the importance of rail and its affect on the economic vitality and quality of life of Fort Wayne constituents.

Media coverage for this meeting was phenomenal. The September 9th Journal Gazette headline supports, *‘The Case for High-Speed Rail – After a good start, hardest part of train revival lies ahead.’* The article written by Joe Beck begins with the comment, *“More than nostalgia for Fort Wayne’s past as a railroad town drew hundreds of people*



to a public hearing last month about an ambitious proposal for introducing high-speed passenger rail service.” The list of people with formal comments was mingled with representatives from all walks of life. A representative of the Fort Wayne International Airport endorsed high-speed trains, noting “...the runways at O’Hare Field in Chicago are *absolutely saturated* and are likely to remain so for the next 10 years.” Others such as Karen Goldner (Fort Wayne’s economic development director) representing Fort Wayne’s Mayor Graham Richard, leaders of the business community, and Representative Mark Souder’s office (Republican-4th District) lauded high speed rail/mass transit as an important investment for the future of Fort Wayne and Indiana overall.

Others making supportive statements at the Fort Wayne meeting included:

- The Fort Wayne/Warsaw High Speed Rail Task Force
- Mayor Ernie Wiggins –Warsaw
- Tim Pape – Fort Wayne City Councilman
- Rob Young, President – Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance
- Brian Bergsma – Director of Government/Community Affairs for the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce
- Dan O’Connell, President and CEO – Fort Wayne/Allen County Visitors and Convention Bureau
- Geoff Paddock, Governor’s Appointee to Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council

Although there were many others on the list of speakers, the message was the same – restore passenger rail service to Fort Wayne. This theme was prevalent not only in the speeches and numerous comments from attendees but also in the letters of support, and resolutions passed by such agencies as the Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corporation (Resolution R-2-01).

To add to the support, a petition was signed by over 140 people. The petition focused on the “... *return of passenger rail service to the City of Fort Wayne*.” In addition to the petitions over 150 people completed the opinion survey passed out at the meeting. Here is just a sample of direct quotes taken from surveys completed by meeting participants:

- *I want more and better rail service for the entire USA. This includes freight/passenger. The rail system has been neglected for over 50 years.*
- *I’m in favor of all public transportation. If we had a subway in Fort Wayne, I’d use it. I’d also like to be able to take a train to Chicago or Cleveland.*
- *Establishing reliable service from Fort Wayne to Chicago, and perhaps cities east of Fort Wayne, such as Cleveland and New York. Fort Wayne as a station for all the reasons stated in the public forum at the library. To bypass Fort Wayne would be tragic.*
- *Have legislation backing for Federal HR2329*
- *Support an initiative to place a station and greater parking area at Waterloo to support existing rail service.*
- *Do it right – build dedicated rail lines.*
- *I seriously believe that we should consider setting up our own state rail system if feds won’t work with us. We are larger than most European countries and they each have their own and they work, and they are on time.*

- *I am most interested in local economic and workforce development. I believe high-speed rail could become an integral part of a robust economic development strategy.*
- *Publicity, publicity, publicity!*
- *Make Fort Wayne a station stop!!*
- *Lobbying for route through Fort Wayne. Provide economic analysis regarding route through Fort Wayne.*
- *Raising money to help with initial planning activities. Feasibility, cost/benefit analysis, route evaluation and coordination with adjacent states and federal government*

The comments and questions raised at the Fort Wayne meeting are shown on the following pages.

Comments and Questions received in Fort Wayne, IN - 8-02-01

Attendance: 400

1. (Baker Street Community Association) Supports re-use of the Baker Street station for passenger rail.
2. (Lincoln Financial) The Annuities Group of Lincoln is 1500 people. We represent a large group that will be part of the ridership base for the Fort Wayne to Chicago HSR train. The Chicago trip time would actually be reduced by HSR vs. car or airplane. This is a quality of life issue.
3. (Verizon External Affairs Manager) Our employees would be able to use this service for travel to both Chicago and Cleveland.
4. (NE Transportation Planning Region) Travel demands will increase over the years which means that we won't have to worry about competition between transportation alternatives, we will need them all. What we desire today is an increase in funding for rail and rail intersection safety.
5. It has been 22 years since we have had a train through Fort Wayne. Fort Wayne needs a train.
6. (State Representative) The legislature needs to hear your voices of support for a Fort Wayne to Chicago HSR connection.
7. (Visitors Bureau) HSR should stop in Fort Wayne. 5 million visitors come to Fort Wayne another 3.2 million pass through. Fort Wayne has a downtown train station and the hotel infrastructure to support being a HSR hub. Fort Wayne has the Emergency Services, helicopter and trauma, to support a HSR stop.
8. (Park View Health) 5600 health care professionals will utilize HSR.
9. (Letter from National City Bank) High Speed Rail is important for continued growth of our community.
10. (Director of Economic Development) Fort Wayne will be a great choice for a HSR stop because it has a "ready to go" ridership base. There are ½ million people in Fort Wayne and the closely surrounding communities. Another 665,000 in other nearby areas. International Truck & Engine, Dana Corporation and Lincoln National are but a few of the businesses in the region that support HSR. Our community is not currently served by rail. Fort Wayne represents net additional ridership. Downtown development is being planned. The Baker Street Station is ready to resume its role. The Gary – Fort Wayne – Warsaw route is "ready to go" for HSR. The route is under one ownership; a second set of tracks can be added without a significant increase in additional rights-of-way. Warsaw and Fort Wayne are partners on HSR in this area.
11. (Warsaw Mayor) Warsaw encourages INDOT to look at the Fort Wayne to Chicago Route. Warsaw employers, RR Donnelly and the orthopedic manufacturing communities, support HSR.
12. (FW 5th district councilman) HSR fits Fort Wayne. FW has poor airline access. As the state's 2nd largest city, FW has the population base to support HSR. Fort Wayne already has a romantic attachment to rail. The downtown revitalization task force has plans for a \$10 million dollar streetscape design plan that goes beyond the train station.
13. In advance of future HSR service, we should have regular speed rail brought back to town.

14. Ticket costs for passengers were questioned and INDOT stated that the estimated price per ticket (in today's dollars) is expected to be approximately 20 to 22 cents per mile.
15. Fort Wayne will benefit from the implementation of HSR.
16. When will the Northern route study results be complete? (INDOT expects it to be complete by mid 2002)
17. HSR will have a positive impact on employers and perspective employers. With 3% unemployment we need to address a labor supply strategy, HSR may have a role.
18. (City Planner Warsaw) I have experienced the French train system, we need to rediscover the infrastructure of rail. I commend INDOT for looking at HSR.
19. (Invent Tomorrow Executive Director) We want HSR in Fort Wayne
20. (Real estate broker) Fort Wayne is an all American city. We should have HSR
21. We are re-inventing the wheel and going back to the future. Fort Wayne was a rail hub in the 19th and 20th century.
22. (Environmental Law and Policy Center) We believe that Indiana should be doing more. IL, MI, and OH have already invested in their HSR infrastructure. IN needs to begin to invest.
23. A HSR stop in Fort Wayne will generate additional ridership; we don't have rail service today.
24. (Business Owner) The time and cost associated with flying to Chicago makes it hard to justify the trip. Airport congestion is not going away. HSR can relieve travel pressure.
25. Fort Wayne seems to be the best HSR route.
26. (City Council) Citizens support return of rail. Fort Wayne was founded on a river, rail helped feed its growth. We have had our love affair with the automobile and look forward to the return of rail.
27. (Mayor's Senior Advisory Council) People are living longer and rail would help seniors continue to travel.
28. (Investor Relations) Favors high speed rail for business and personal travel.
29. Rail would be good for young, elderly, and disabled. We will have better access to museums, libraries, and other points of interest.
30. Don't forget Amish who must take train, as they cannot fly.
31. (Environmental Law & Policy Center) Sees HSR as a transportation alternative with virtually no environmental impact. A representative stated that HSR could bring business back to our cities and make urban jobs accessible to rural workers. According to their representative, Indiana trails the other Midwestern states in dollars currently budgeted for HSR.
32. (Indiana High Speed Rail Association) Compliments to INDOT on having HSR public involvement meetings. HSR is more fuel efficient and safer then alternative forms of travel. A HSR infrastructure that joins Indiana with other Midwestern commerce centers will attract business to the state.

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South Bend Public Outreach Meeting

August 7, 2001

Mishawaka Penn-Harris Library

About 175 people from South Bend, Elkhart, Mishawaka and surrounding communities attended the public outreach meeting held at the Mishawaka Penn-Harris Library. The South Bend Tribune and Elkhart Truth sent reporters to record the story, which by both accounts documented that public response at the meeting was generally positive. The Tribune said “... *Representatives from South Bend, Elkhart, the state Senate and environmental groups praised the proposed system.*” Senator Marvin Riegsecker, R-Goshen and Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, stated that he has long supported high-speed rail and recognizes the importance it has for cities such as South Bend. Gary Gilot, South Bend’s Public Works Director echoed the Senator’s sentiments and expanded the point to include a reference to the positive affect that high speed rail can have on economic development.

The audience at the South Bend meeting was also interested in hearing more about financing for infrastructure and grade crossing improvements. In fact, Elkhart’s Mayor Miller quoted safety statistics and introduced issues relating to how long trains occupy tracks. Others expressed concerns that Indiana would miss out on federal funding opportunities if it did not mobilize quickly to implement its high-speed rail concepts. Furthermore, the same individuals were concerned that the federal funding for high-speed rail development would go to other states. This concern was supported by additional speakers who commented that US efforts to advance high speed rail are significantly lagging behind many European countries. INDOT was advised to learn from those European models where publicly financed bullet train service has been a way of life for decades.



High speed rail advocates communicated their support in a variety of ways as mentioned in previous sections of this report, the South Bend Public Transportation Corporation passed Resolution No. 27-2001, expressing support for the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative to include South Bend in its routing and as a major station destination between Chicago and Cleveland. Many others who could not attend the meeting sent their letters/emails supporting high-speed rail in Indiana.

When asked what next steps should be implemented, those completing the Opinion Survey were very specific. Here are just a few of the responses:

- *Funding, Safety, and corridor decisions*
- *Establishing South Bend as center for high speed rail with east/west and Indianapolis*
- *Determine a Fort Wayne/Elkhart/South Bend route. Don't pit two areas against each other, if at all possible, even at risk of slowing down the train.*
- *Implement high speed rail statewide*
- *Obtaining funds to fully implement high speed rail*
- *Examine grade crossing safety issues*
- *Coordinate additional planning efforts with local economic development agencies*

The comments and questions raised during the South Bend meeting are shown on the next page.

Comments and Questions received in South Bend, IN - 8-07-01

Attendance: 175

1. We need gated crossings that you cannot go around – similar or better than what exists in Europe.
2. (Public Works Director South Bend) The South Bend area can feed the system with its intermodal support infrastructure. The expanded South Bend bus system will make the same day travel market larger.
3. Additional specifics were requested and provided by INDOT about the Northern Indiana Routing Study.
4. Congratulations to IN on the progress over the last 5 years in HSR. However, we still are behind other areas of the country. The Portland to Seattle route is working. 100,000 annual riders in 1990 have grown to 600,000 riders in 2000. California has had similar experiences.
5. (Chairman St. Joe County, Transportation Committee) Consideration should be given to serving both South Bend and Fort Wayne. The number of stops must be examined closely however, to maintain fast and efficient service.
6. (Mayor, Elkhart) HSR trains are short and move quickly and therefore should not occupy crossings for a significant amount of time. Elkhart currently has several grade separation projects currently underway. Coordination and cooperation between these projects and future high-speed rail plans is important. Safety and whistle ban issues were also discussed, including the impact of four quadrant gates and the level of safety they can help to provide. Train horns are a concern in Elkhart.
7. (Environmental Law & Policy Center) Sees HSR as a transportation alternative with virtually no environmental impact. A representative stated that HSR could bring business back to our cities and make urban jobs accessible to rural workers. According to their representative, Indiana trails the other Midwestern states in dollars currently budgeted for HSR.
8. (Indiana High Speed Rail Association) Compliments to INDOT on having HSR public involvement meetings. HSR is more fuel efficient and safer than alternative forms of travel. A HSR infrastructure that joins Indiana with other Midwestern commerce centers will attract business to the state.
9. It is important for Indiana to try to establish a HSR funding source that will help it provide funds similar to some of our surrounding states. I understand that funds can be transferred from the Industrial Rail Service Fund (\$1.5 million per year).
10. If Indiana does not have money committed to HSR we will lose out on federal monies to other nearby states.
11. Indiana is the key to the success of HSR in the Midwest.
12. (South Bend Bus Company) We will get passengers to the train station. The Michiana – South Bend stops are important.
13. (Chamber of Commerce St Joe County) Make St Joseph County a part of your plans.
14. (South Bend – Mishawaka Exec Director of Convention & Visitors Bureau) There are many attractions for travel to the area including Notre Dame. Don't discount the southwest Michigan area and its affinity to South Bend and Elkhart.
15. (Director of Elkhart Rail Road Museum) We are supporters of HSR coming to this area.

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Clarksville Public Outreach Meeting

August 15, 2001

Clarksville Public Library

The Indiana Department of Transportation hosted approximately 80 people at the Clarksville meeting. Although smaller in comparison to the numbers that attended meetings in other locations, the audience provided excellent feedback much of which focused on implementing a system that would connect the Indiana/Kentucky region. The audience was as interested in discussing the probabilities of implementation as it was in listening to the report of INDOT's efforts. The Courier-Journal captured this with its eye-catching headline, *'Fast Rail for the Region at Least 10 Years Off' – August 16th issue*. INDOT officials explained that Congress is considering a bill that would release \$10 billion to subsidize planning and construction of passenger rail. To that comment, Jeffersonville Mayor Tom Galligan said, *"You can not fight funding for highways, turning it over to high speed rail. You have to have a balance. ... (for cities to be economically viable) we need a whole lot of transportation."* And, there were others such as Ron Schneider, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Engineer, revealing some of the tough issues that will need to be resolved such as interstate cooperation.

Rail advocates voiced their disappointment that the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is not a member of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. Several members of the local rail/transit advocacy organization (CART) applauded INDOT's forethought and willingness to examine high-speed rail alternatives. Others commented that lack of support from Kentucky could likely result in missed opportunities for Indiana. Definitely a spirited discussion, including additional comments about everything from ensuring seniors are safe at railroad stations to advice that benefit cost studies should be conducted as a part of the overall analysis. Several individuals made a case for continued public awareness programs and special outreach to schoolchildren to increase grass roots support.

The Clarksville audience emphasized the need to conduct more in-depth analysis of passenger rail alternatives especially those that would connect Indiana and Kentucky. One can tell from the questions that will follow this section that the audience definitely came ready to offer input to INDOT officials. The Opinion Survey comments were just as interesting as the discussions including recommendations to:

- Improve tracks between Louisville, Indianapolis, and Chicago
- Use Equipment displays as a means to heighten public awareness
- Develop alliance with politically influential individuals and organizations
- Better define High Speed Rail for the public because some newspaper articles mis-represented the subject

The comments and questions raised at the Clarksville meeting are shown on the following pages.

Comments and Questions received in Clarksville, IN 8-15-01

Attendance: 80

1. (Ky – IN Rail Advocate) Wants to see an Indianapolis to Chicago train that follows the Illinois Lakefront with a stop at McCormick Place.
2. We need to have outreach programs into the high schools and colleges to increase the discussions on HSR. There is a need for Louisville service.
3. Lived in Texas when HSR was evaluated in that area. It did not happen because of perceived safety concerns that were raised by representatives of air transit groups. Has anyone done any opportunity cost studies comparing highway dollars to rail dollars?
4. (CART) Disappointed that Kentucky is not part of the HSR coalition. The midway airfield is moving into chapter 11 status, the 5th such in recent times. Air travel and road travel receive significant federal subsidies, we should not be ashamed of the fact that rail needs subsidies.
5. (CART) Enjoyed traveling by rail in Europe. There is growing support for HSR in the Midwest.
6. What is the level of Kentucky involvement in HSR?
7. (Kentucky Transportation Cabinet) Kentucky hasn't joined the Midwest HSR initiative. Are grade separations required at this speed? (Not at speeds under 110 mph.)
8. Pollution emissions are most reasonable in rail. It is harder to reduce pollution from cars and airplanes, including noise pollution. With rail we can leverage multimodal transportation services to bring passengers to the trains. Would like to see more studies at the sites where the trains will not stop.
9. Ticket prices should include long-term safe parking at the train stops and the intermodal feeder points? Our aging population will benefit from rail travel.
10. (Environmental Law & Policy Center) Sees HSR as a transportation alternative with virtually no environmental impact. A representative stated that HSR could bring business back to our cities and make urban jobs accessible to rural workers. According to their representative, Indiana trails the other Midwestern states in dollars currently budgeted for HSR.
11. (Indiana High Speed Rail Association) Compliments to INDOT on having HSR public involvement meetings. HSR is more fuel efficient and safer than alternative forms of travel. A HSR infrastructure that joins Indiana with other Midwestern commerce centers will attract business to the state.
12. Don't let this become a game of delays, we need to move for more state HSR funding now.
13. (Railroad Detective) A proponent of HSR. Why are we just looking at 110 mph trains? France had 230 mph trains in 1928. In addition to crossing accidents someone needs to be concerned about vandalism. Vandalism is a problem today.
14. Rail ridership is growing across the country. We need an Indiana financial commitment to HSR.
15. It is amazing that the proposed HSR system won't need a local operational subsidy.
16. How does the 10-year cost of \$5 billion (\$750 million in Indiana) compare to what is spent on air and highways? One new major airport can cost \$2 B to \$6 B. In 2001,

Indiana's highway budget was a little over \$700 M. Air and highways have ways of generating their own funds. Rail can't do this right now without the capital to run at efficient operating levels.

17. Is there any alternative to Amtrak? The Midwest plan is not absolutely linked to Amtrak. It just needs a qualified operator to run the system.
18. (Transit Authority River City) Louisville is excited about HSR.
19. If the Olympics come to Cincinnati then HSR will positively impact attendance.

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Indianapolis Public Outreach Meeting

August 21, 2001

Glendale Mall Library

The auditorium of the Glendale Library was packed with over 200 people listening to INDOT officials as they spoke of high-speed rail service with connections to Indianapolis. The majority of people in attendance spoke in favor of high-speed rail, but some expressed concern that the \$4.1 billion cost estimate was prohibitive.



The Indianapolis meeting attracted a good mixture of people including citizens, business leaders, state and city government officials, a representative from the Federal Rail Administration, Chairman and members of the Beech Grove Amtrak Task Force, members of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, as well as the Indiana High Speed Rail Association. The Opinion Survey completed by many of the attendees gave a better perspective of the audience and their interests. From retirees to banking officials and college students, the Indianapolis audience represented a diverse cross-section of perspectives.

With the multiple press releases distributed by INDOT, and the momentum spurred by meetings that preceded the one in Indianapolis – the local Indianapolis Star was chocked with letters to the editor published August 27th through August 28th on Rail Transportation. The sample statements varied from supportive to those that showed disbelief that high-speed rail would solve traffic congestion problems in Indianapolis. Here are just a few of the subtitles:

- *Conventional Rail Can Go a Long Way*
- *Love Affair With Cars Must Be Cooled Down*
- *Rail Will Look Better As Roads, Skies Worsen*
- *Senior Citizen Sees Lots of Advantages*
- *Century or So Later, They've Gotten Slower*
- *If You Want Speed, Run From Amtrak*

Once the comment/question and answer period began, the discussion continued for quite a while. The topics ran the gamut from how Indiana would finance the project to issues relating to the coordination of other transportation planning studies. In addition to the comments and questions raised at the meeting, INDOT received copies of support letters written to Representatives Julia Carson and Dan Burton. One citizen wrote *"I know that with your connections in Indiana, you can see that INDOT receives the power/money it needs to move quickly on this project."* Another commented that Indiana was doing the right thing by investigating high-speed rail alternatives. She was equally as interested in

making sure the location of the rail did not “...*lower the property value of surrounding neighborhoods.*” Other comments from the Opinion Survey recommended the following next steps:

- *Create need and excitement surrounding this rollout.*
- *Advertise in papers and TV, encourage legislation of funds, have additional public hearings, engage Governor O’Bannon to promote rail.*
- *Improving speed, number of trains, and times of service between Indianapolis and Chicago, and Indianapolis to Washington, D.C.*
- *Continue to work with FRA, Midwest Compact, Amtrak, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, and Ohio to evaluate and refine corridors. Fund these engineering studies.*
- *Make sure trains and stations have lap top computer connections, food, car rental at stations, walking connections to local “mass” transit, especially light rail, and bus service at station.*
- *Preserve the Beech Grove Amtrak facility.*

The questions and comments raised at the Indianapolis meeting are shown on the following pages.

Comments and Questions received in Indianapolis, IN 8-21-01

Attendance: 225

1. Indianapolis needs to have better intermodal connections from its train station. Otherwise, when visitors arrive, they will likely need to rent a car to get around.
2. Auto racing, special events, and the Colts will all draw people to Indianapolis. HSR will be used to bring them into town.
3. How soon can we have HSR? INDOT responded that once funding is available, the full Midwest build-out plan is projected to take approximately ten years. Some of the earliest corridors to be built could be running within five or six years.
4. Funding flexibility with transportation dollars might be one way to help fund work on this project.
5. Congratulations to INDOT on conducting a good series of public meetings. Since 80% of the funds are federal monies, how much guidance does INDOT receive on route selection from federal agencies? INDOT stated that route selection involves coordination between the State, Federal authorities, cities and local citizens through public input.
6. What are INDOT's plans for intrastate routes, i.e. Muncie to Indianapolis? INDOT answered that additional routes are also being examined for potential future expansions. It will be important to develop the most cost effective routes first.
7. It would be good to get a reasonable speed train to Chicago today.
8. What happens if Amtrak fails to deliver or passes on HSR? Does our opportunity for HSR go away? INDOT answered that the Midwest Initiative planning efforts are not necessarily tied to Amtrak. Other operators could also provide the service if that was deemed to be the best way to run the system.
9. Happy to see this presentation on HSR. We are behind the times; we need financial support for HSR added to the budget.
10. Local light rail funding may compete with HSR funding. State and local planners need to work together to determine funding strategies for these two types of rail services.
11. Have studies been done to determine the costs of track upgrades required to support the High Speed Rail trains? INDOT answered that it varies by location but is in the \$1.0 M to \$1.5 M per mile range (including crossing treatments).
12. It is important to recognize the economic development possibilities from HSR. Examples, such as construction and manufacturing jobs, tourism and business benefits should be identified to help push HSR development.
13. (Indianapolis Downtown Inc.) This will be a great system with HSR routes to Chicago, Cincinnati, and Louisville. Other potential routes should also be examined.
14. It is important to consider making a connection to the Indianapolis airport.
15. (Mayor Beech Grove) Remember the Beech Grove Amtrak Repair Facility.
16. With the HSR routes being studied, how much of a train's travel time will really be at the higher speed? There are some 150 mph routes out east where trains only spend 18 minutes at 150 mph. INDOT answered that we are fortunate in Indiana that most of the routes being considered will be able to use straight, flat track. This will help trains operate at the higher speeds for a much higher percentage of the time than the East Coast operations.

17. Where will monies come from? Congress funds airports and highways. INDOT answered that various funding plans are being developed, usually incorporating a combination of federal and state dollars to help build the needed infrastructure. No firm plan has been established yet. Ideally, the revenue from operations will offset operating costs in the Midwest to eliminate the need for continued funding.
18. Will there be “small station” stops, like in Greensburg? INDOT answered that some smaller communities may be able to have stops – but only a few of the total number of trains will make stops.
19. Historically, passenger rail systems have never funded themselves.
20. (Environmental Law & Policy Center) Sees HSR as a transportation alternative with virtually no environmental impact. A representative stated that HSR could bring business back to our cities and make urban jobs accessible to rural workers. According to their representative, Indiana trails the other Midwestern states in dollars currently budgeted for HSR.
21. (Indiana High Speed Rail Association) Compliments to INDOT on having HSR public involvement meetings. HSR is more fuel efficient and safer than alternative forms of travel. A HSR infrastructure that joins Indiana with other Midwestern commerce centers will attract business to the state.
22. (Private Freight Railroad) We move millions of tons of freight, several hundred thousand truck bodies and all on rail lines that might have been closed and abandoned. Freight rail lines receive no federal subsidy. Freight lines could host Amtrak as a guest (for a fee) and play a role in HSR. From a quality of life standpoint, we need HSR. A small highway construction project (like the I 465 project) can cost up to \$80 million dollars. HSR is a bargain.
23. Some industries seem to have a vested interest against HSR as they look to protect their profits. How do we contend with their paid lobbyists? (Need to show similar benefits from HSR development.)
24. It seems that light rail can impact more people. You should push light rail more.
25. Public / private partnerships may be helpful to fund part of the HSR initiative.
26. HSR will benefit Indiana workers with track and equipment maintenance and opportunities for manufacturing jobs.
27. Has traveled 92,066 miles on Amtrak. They have never lost his luggage or cancelled a train. HSR will work and the service will be reliable.
28. Can commuter trains run on the HSR track? It is possible if congestion levels are not too high.
29. The gambling boats will support HSR if there are stops near them.
30. No HSR systems have been profitable and self-sufficient.
31. Japan’s national railroad makes a profit. In the United Kingdom the government owns the track and allows franchise partners to provide rail service over the government owned infrastructure.
32. The INDOT long-range plan is described as a highway plan. That title should be modified to reflect rail and other transportation modes.

Lawrenceburg Public Outreach Meeting

August 28, 2001

Lawrenceburg Public Library

The Indiana Department of Transportation hosted the Lawrenceburg meeting at the Public Library where approximately 60 people attended. The support base was comprised of Indiana and Ohio residents. Public comments were made by many, including Shannon Harps (Transportation Policy Analyst, Sierra Club –Ohio Chapter) and Tom Ewing (Legislative and Policy Analyst for the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce).

Similar to all of the previous meetings, the Lawrenceburg audience was comprised of people of all walks of life with varying degrees of appreciation for high-speed rail. As with the other meetings, the support far outweighed concerns for how the project would be financed.

People at this meeting were more interested in making sure maximal public participation and public awareness activities are underway to garner support particularly for connections between Indianapolis-Chicago-Cincinnati. One citizen asked whether there could be a Cincinnati to St. Louis route. Others seemed to share an interest in expanding regionalism to include other points in the Midwest. It is interesting to note that people in this region seem to share an appreciation for regionalism, which shows in a number of economic development opportunities and other achievements that have benefited communities in the Tri-State area. Concerned citizens, local business leaders, and representatives of the Ohio Rail Development Commission voiced their interests in organizing advocacy initiatives to raise public awareness and obtain legislative funding support for high speed rail to the region. The next steps recommended by those completing the Opinion Survey echoed the same sentiment. Mayor Richard Ullrich of Aurora, Indiana said INDOT should focus on obtaining funding from state, federal and local sources. He also added, as did others that the station amenities are key. People should be able to check their bags, feel safe, and have access to great food and friendly/effective service. Several people also urged INDOT to ensure the trains have comfortable seating.

A schoolteacher from Aurora added an important view when she said, *“You need to approach cities and help them see how trains can provide a vehicle for economic development within their cities vs. airports, which lend to economic development on the outskirts of a city.”*

The questions and comments from the Lawrenceburg meeting are shown on the following pages.

Comments and Questions received in Lawrenceburg, Indiana August 28, 2001

Attendance: 60

1. The Dearborn County Chamber of Commerce expressed strong support for High Speed Rail on the route from Chicago to Cincinnati via Lawrenceburg and offered to play a local role in making High Speed Rail a reality. The Chamber will put together a list of local supporters.
2. The Ohio Rail Development Commission encouraged people to contact their national representatives regarding the upcoming debate on the High Speed Rail Investment Act.
3. There is a nucleus of support for High Speed Rail. Dearborn County needs to establish some regionalism with Cincinnati.
4. The need for reduced travel times between major metropolitan areas needs to be balanced with the desire for intermediate stops in smaller communities along the route.
5. The High Speed Rail Investment Act must pass. The current rumor is that it will be attached to other funding initiatives. There are success stories of regions that have already begun to invest in High Speed Rail such as the Pacific Northwest.
6. The State Legislature needs to be brought up to speed on High Speed Rail development so that we can help them understand our needs as we try to understand their concerns.
7. A stop in Lawrenceburg would serve the west side of Cincinnati as many of those residents may not want to drive downtown to catch a train. That stop could serve the airport and the riverboat casinos as well.
8. For High Speed Rail to work we will need to make it an attractive enough alternative to get people out of their cars.
9. It is not an either-or, the highway system will be there, the airline system will be there, and trains will represent another travel option.
10. This is a regional initiative and that is why there has been movement on High Speed Rail. There would probably be support for service between Cincinnati and St. Louis.
11. Does Chicago have to be the hub for all city-to-city travel? INDOT explained that economic efficiencies, similar to those achieved by the airline hub system, necessitated the Midwest System's hub design.
12. Indiana is a "donor state", sending more money to Washington than we get back. High Speed Rail investment will help bring some of that money back home.
13. The numbers on the Cincinnati to Chicago line are so profitable that the corridor might help offset losses expected in other parts of the system.
14. High Speed Rail could be made more profitable by allowing trains to carry express freight.
15. Amtrak corridor studies show the Cincinnati to Chicago corridor to be the second most profitable in the country. The number one corridor is in California and now as 12 daily trains assigned to its passenger base.

16. You need to approach cities and help them see how trains can provide a vehicle for economic development within their cities vs. airports that lend to economic development in suburbs.
17. (Environmental Law & Policy Center) Sees HSR as a transportation alternative with virtually no environmental impact. A representative stated that HSR could bring business back to our cities and make urban jobs accessible to rural workers. According to their representative, Indiana trails the other Midwestern states in dollars currently budgeted for HSR.
18. (Indiana High Speed Rail Association) Compliments to INDOT on having HSR public involvement meetings. HSR is more fuel efficient and safer than alternative forms of travel. A HSR infrastructure that joins Indiana with other Midwestern commerce centers will attract business to the state.
19. Freight railroads will have to cooperate to make High Speed Rail successful.
20. We need to stress the environmental issues and the concern for future generations. This valley is terrible for pollution. High Speed Rail will produce less pollution than cars.
21. As a young person, I cannot wait to run and jump in a car but I see the benefit of High Speed Rail.

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Lafayette Public Outreach Meeting

October 16, 2001

Lafayette Depot @ Riehle Plaza

People in Lafayette really know how to celebrate passenger rail service. With a restored Depot in downtown, passenger friendly land uses around the Depot plaza including parking, and active Amtrak service – Lafayette is positioned for a connection in any passenger/high speed rail network. Comments from the nearly 150 people attending the meeting support that position.

Lafayette sponsored a symbolic “Last Train” ride last year celebrating the anticipated completion of their railroad relocation project. So, it is no wonder there were so many questions about rail safety, fencing rights-of-way, and high speed rail co-existing with the freight infrastructure. A representative of the Lafayette Fire Department was even interested in “...*the role of fire safety personnel in High speed rail.*” Lafayette’s Mayor Heath announced that the City Passed Resolution No. 2000-22 supporting high-speed rail. The language is consistent with that incorporated in the Tippecanoe County Board of Commissioners Resolution No. 2001-17-CM, which acknowledges the benefits of high-speed passenger rail, and documents the Commissioners “*full support*” to the Midwestern efforts to establish and participate in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. The Commissioners further urge federal and state representatives, the President of the United States and the Governor of the State of Indiana to establish a dedicated national and state funding mechanism for high-speed passenger rail service.



Meeting participants expressed an interest in connections to Chicago, Michigan, and Indianapolis as well. One meeting participant stated, “*In Michigan the routes go through every major city but in Indiana we miss many of our cities. Why? Are we going to upgrade existing corridors first?*” Others nodded affirmatively as her comments were made. Quite a few long time rail patrons spoke in support of high-speed rail adding, “*As a long-term train traveler, I have seen a decline in rail service. I am proud of the road and air infrastructures we have built. We need to reinvest in our rail infrastructure.*”

Nearly 50 Opinion Surveys were completed some of which were submitted by city and county officials, Purdue professors, retirees, students and other professionals. A pretty good mixture of folks and interests were represented. When asked about next steps, the attendees responded in this way:

- *Accelerate efforts to solve northwest bottleneck. Complete all engineering on federally designated corridors.*
- *Do more pilots and then comprehensive efforts to close crossings or increase grade crossing protections*
- *Promote the budget and begin track and signal upgrades. Then, let's buy trains like Wisconsin and Illinois!*
- *Proceed! Publicity to let more people know. Government officials on all levels must make this a priority.*
- *Provide connections to Chicago, O'Hare and Gary Airport, Indianapolis Airport and downtown, then Cincinnati and St. Louis*
- *Secure an operator, secure trackage and station rights. Secure service agreements with freight railroads. Plan to eliminate Chicago bottlenecks.*
- *Use the present rail routes now serving the state; then improve routes and equipment.*
- *Do it now. Make scenic. Use highway right-of-way for passenger trains.*
- *Improve the Lafayette station so that passengers do not need/have to carry luggage up two floors-across a footbridge and down two floors to the unprotected station platform.*
- *Eliminate or upgrade current rail crossings*

Lafayette participants' questions and comments are shown on the following pages.

Comments and Questions Received in Lafayette, IN October 16, 2001

Attendance: 150

1. Go for it!
2. Concern expressed for Indiana's High Speed Rail efforts relative to neighboring states.
3. Something needs to be done about congestion in and around Chicago. South-of-the-Lake reroute project supported but concern was expressed that Indiana not be viewed solely as a "pass through" state.
4. Some thought more small cities and additional routes should be served. INDOT explained that economics, ridership projections and cost-benefit analysis led to the focus on routes connecting larger cities as a first step.
5. Highway congestion, particularly around Chicago, is getting worse as more and more trucks are using the interstate. Rail would seem like a viable alternative for both freight and passenger service. The state should look into rail investments as part of the overall transportation plan.
6. Concern was expressed that passenger trains not force freight off the rails and onto highways. INDOT explained that where rail congestion was a problem, separate tracks or sidings would need to be constructed.
7. The Mayor of West Lafayette commented that students in Lafayette and Bloomington would benefit from High Speed Rail. West Lafayette city council adopted a supporting resolution.
8. The events of September 11, 2001 showed the need for additional modal choice that could fill the gap when a particular mode (such as air travel) was disrupted by an emergency or terrorism.
9. (Environmental Law & Policy Center) Sees HSR as a transportation alternative with virtually no environmental impact. A representative stated that HSR could bring business back to our cities and make urban jobs accessible to rural workers. According to their representative, Indiana trails the other Midwestern states in dollars currently budgeted for HSR.
10. (Indiana High Speed Rail Association) Compliments to INDOT on having HSR public involvement meetings. HSR is more fuel efficient and safer than alternative forms of travel. A HSR infrastructure that joins Indiana with other Midwestern commerce centers will attract business to the state.
11. We need High Speed Rail, not because air travel isn't safe but just because we need it.
12. Freight railroads do not give passenger trains priority, causing delays. The federal government needs to do more to support Amtrak.
13. We need to support all modes of transportation and not pit rail against air and highway.
14. We cannot continue to add to the highways, they are already dangerous. We need alternatives. High Speed Rail should be given an equal footing with highways.
15. There is a public perception that High Speed Rail is necessary.

16. As a long-time train traveler, I have seen a decline in rail service. I am proud of the road and air infrastructure we have built. We need to re-invest in our rail infrastructure. Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois have all spent money on High Speed Rail. Indiana needs to begin to spend rail dollars.
17. The Lafayette Fire Department commented that the operators and planners of High Speed Rail would need to involve and coordinate with fire and safety personnel.
18. Concern was expressed about the safety of people who liked to walk along the railroad. Fencing was suggested where trains would run through urban areas.
19. We need to be certain that crossings are safe for high speed trains. Four-quadrant gates are safer but also more expensive. Grade separations are even safer than gates but they are even more expensive.
20. How about High Speed Rail to Evansville instead of a highway? INDOT explained The North American Free Trade Agreement is the driving force for the Interstate construction. Passenger rail is not part of this effort.
21. What about commuter travel between Lafayette and Indianapolis? INDOT explained that the schedules and fares associated with High Speed Rail would fit interstate travel markets and would not be conducive to most commuter travel.
22. We should put High Speed Rail down the middle of the Interstate medians.
23. The Midwest System should connect to the East Coast and New York City. Regional travel passes should be made available similar to the Euro-Rail Pass.
24. High Speed Trains could be made more profitable by carrying mail and express freight.
25. INDOT should “think out of the box” when planning for High Speed Rail. For example, the use of new technologies such as concrete railroad ties should be explored.

Conclusions

The Indiana Passenger Rail Initiative encompasses multiple efforts including feasibility studies that have been and are likely to be conducted, stakeholder awareness and education through projects such as the Rail Communication Plan, and a continuing active collaboration with the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. INDOT has a planning calendar that includes additional measures that will need to be implemented before any of the recommended routes are developed. The most significant of which is preliminary environmental and engineering design work, which will be necessary in order to develop cost estimates. In spite of the expansive \$4 billion plus price tag for the entire Midwest Regional Rail System, people believe this project deserves funding when compared to the billions that are invested in highways and airports annually. The audiences expressed their support for identifying means to ensure the state legislature and federal elected officials are convinced that the investment is necessary. The audiences voiced their support and their belief that High Speed Rail would create a new transportation system for Indiana Citizens. Even though the cost for the Midwest system will be in the billions of dollars, with federal funds and other states sharing costs for infrastructure, Indiana's costs could be less than \$200 million.

The support this project has from people attending the seven (7) statewide meetings is unquestionable. People commented that they want choices and the opportunity to choose passenger rail options as long as they will be high speed, safe, connected to other mass transit/bus transit services, convenient, affordable and reliable. Citizens from through out the state have signed petitions, supported resolutions, and written their legislators.

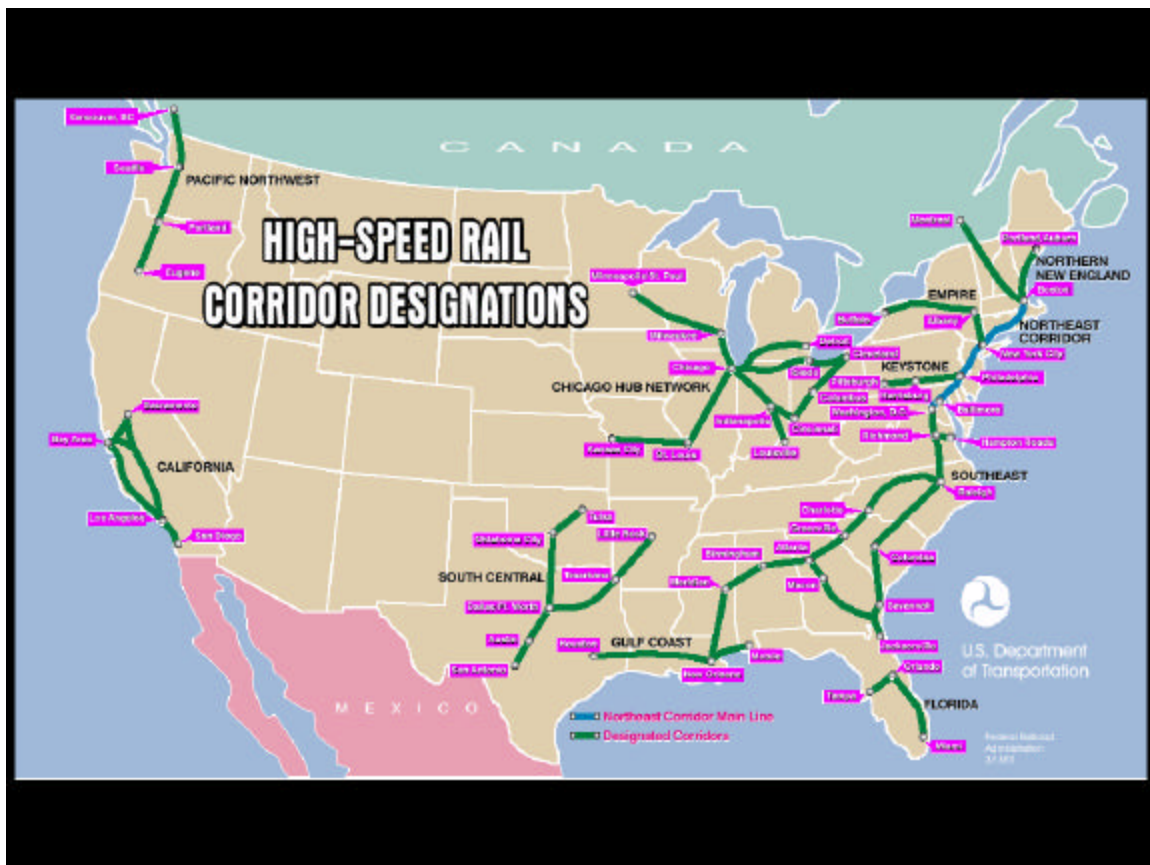
What is next? Here is the list according to INDOT officials:

- Continued support for Federal funding through passage of the High Speed Rail Investment Act.
- Increase level of discussion and coordination with freight railroads.
- Finish study evaluating northern Indiana routing question
- Move forward with preliminary environmental analysis, including opportunities for additional public input through public hearings
- Crossing issues will be systematically addressed along all corridors.
- State funding questions to be addressed, including source of state funds and cost sharing issues with adjacent states.



**Figure 3: Potential
Indiana HSR routes**

The citizens, business leaders, elected local officials, grandparents, and students of all walks of life repeatedly said, “...it is the right thing to do, move forward.” There is no question that there are a number of challenges and issues that need to be addressed, but one thing is for sure, and that is that through INDOT’s Rail Communication Plan project there is documented evidence that people have spoken, or at least close to 1,200 have, and they are interested in progress, modal choices, and action sooner than later.



Appendix A: Invitations and Handouts

Meeting Notice/Invitation

Post Card Front

You are invited to attend the
Indiana Department of Transportation
Midwest Regional Passenger Rail System
Community Outreach Meeting
Tuesday, August 21, 2001
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Glendale Mall Library Branch
6101 North Keystone Ave.
Indianapolis, Indiana

If you are unable to attend but would like an Information Packet call 317-570-4000 Ext. 159

We will discuss INDOT's involvement in regional passenger rail initiatives, share INDOT's vision for future rail service and engage in a question/answer session.

Post Card Back

MIDWEST REGIONAL PASSENGER RAIL SYSTEM
INDOT RAILROAD SECTION
IGCN Room 901
100 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Please plan to attend our
Community Outreach Meeting...

The Midwest Regional
Passenger Rail System



"Taking A Bold Track Into A New Century"
Indiana Department of Transportation

Frequently Asked Questions Handout

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

How will the location of station stops be decided?

Because of the importance of reducing overall trip time, there will be a need to keep the number of station stops to a minimum. Population and ridership levels will be key factors in selecting stop locations. It is estimated that only communities with more than 50,000 residents will be able to generate enough ridership to justify a high-speed train stop. Depending on demand, smaller communities might be designated as limited stops where a reduced high-speed schedule would operate. It is likely that residents of smaller communities would have access to high-speed stops via continued conventional train service and/or connector bus service.

Will trains travel at 110 mph?

According to federal safety regulations, 110 mph is the maximum speed passenger trains are allowed to travel on rail segments that have at-grade crossings. To travel above 110 mph, the corridor would need to be completely grade separated (a very expensive and unlikely proposition). Trains will not travel at this maximum speed over the entire length of the corridors. Most likely they may only reach 110 mph for short distances along the corridor. Conditions such as track curvature or travel through urban areas might be reasons why trains would travel at lower than maximum speeds.

What are the proposed safety treatments at rail crossings?

Each situation will be analyzed separately according to the particular circumstances of the crossing. At a minimum, INDOT anticipates it will be necessary to have a crossing gate or gates that completely barricade any vehicle access across the rail line. Full barrier gates eliminate the chance for driver error by preventing vehicle access to the crossing. In some instances closure of crossings might be an appropriate solution, provided alternative access is readily available. If conditions merit the expense, new bridges could be another option.

Additional advance warning signs will also be a requirement, to make people very aware of the possibility of high-speed trains at a crossing. In addition to safety features for vehicles, pedestrian and bicycle activity will also be considered.

What other types of safety measures might be put in place?

Fencing along portions of the corridor could be put in place if future studies show it is necessary. In urban areas, the fencing could be of a decorative nature, designed in cooperation with local neighborhood and community groups. It would blend in with surrounding housing and local development while still enhancing the safety of the corridor by directing people to cross the tracks at designated crossings only. The fencing will not create a visual barrier for community residents.

Track improvements will include rebuilding the rail bed and providing heavy continuously welded rail. These improvements will allow trains to safely operate along

the corridor. A new state of the art positive train control (PTC) system will be installed along the entire corridor to ensure that both passenger and freight trains are properly separated from each other and to provide information to the train engineers on the status of warning devices at each grade crossing. If problems are detected, the trains can be automatically slowed or stopped.

How much will the proposed routes, stations, track improvements costs?

The cost for upgrading tracks (on a per-mile basis) varies depending on the particular circumstances of the corridor segment. Improving track through a largely flat, rural area with minimal crossings might cost \$500,000 per mile. In densely developed areas, the cost could be significantly greater. Current estimates show the approximate cost for corridor development through Indiana averaging out to slightly more than \$1 million per mile. Congress is currently considering a plan to provide federal funding through guaranteed bonding authority for Amtrak to sell up to \$12 billion in bonds on the private market over a ten year period. Funding would be provided at an 80% federal / 20% state ratio. In instances where corridors serve two or more states, an equitable split of the 20% state match would be needed. For example, while the route from Chicago to Cincinnati would serve around 2 million people in the greater Cincinnati area, only about 15 miles of the 300-mile Chicago to Cincinnati corridor is in Ohio. Indiana and Ohio would need to determine a fair way to split the state costs for service on this line.

How will Indiana cover the costs for these capital projects?

To date, there have been no decisions made as to how the state of Indiana might pay for potential high-speed rail improvements or whether the high-speed system will even be built. Any funding decision for high-speed rail improvements would need to be supported by the general public and the finance strategy would need to be approved by the state legislature.

How will the Railroads be involved?

The freight railroads are aware of the preliminary planning that has occurred related to the possible future use of rail lines for high-speed passenger rail services. A primary condition of any plans for the Midwest system has been that there will be no negative impact on freight rail service due to the additional passenger services. Any plans for improvements to permit passenger trains would need to be authorized and developed in accordance with the owning freight railroad.

What is Amtrak's involvement in the planning and implementation of passenger rail service improvements in Indiana and the region?

Amtrak has been a partner with the nine states that have been investigating plans for improved passenger rail services in the Midwest. They have been involved in the discussions and have helped provide information about passenger rail operations and their experiences relating to improving services for higher speeds on the east and west coasts. There has been no commitment however that Amtrak will be the operator of any future Midwest service.

Plans will have taken current and future levels of freight service on rail lines into account. If passenger rail service were to begin on a line, an understanding of the operational

characteristics would need to be reached with the freight railroad that owns the line. Additional rail sidings or possibly long segments of additional parallel tracks would need to be built to allow freight services to remain unaffected. If freight levels are not particularly high, which could be the case for several segments being considered in Indiana, changes of this type might only be minimal. Some freight operations might be shifted to off-peak passenger times (over-night or early morning hours) if that was deemed the best approach by all involved. Decisions of this type would be discussed at future environmental hearings if plans advance to that stage.

Who will have the responsibility of maintenance of the areas next to the track, specifically regarding trash, right-of-way maintenance, fencing, etc.?

The passenger railroad owning or operating the service will be responsible for maintenance. This is in accordance with the same rules that freight railroads currently are required to follow.

What will the fares be?

In preparing a business strategy to determine the viability of a Midwest system, a ticket pricing strategy was proposed that would allow projected revenues to meet and possibly exceed projected costs. Ticket prices were planned to be very competitive with the existing lowest discount airfare rates between cities. For example a round trip ticket between Indianapolis and Chicago would likely be in the \$75 to \$95 range. Pricing would be done according to a formula that would maximize ridership and revenues. With competitive pricing, a primary selling point for ridership would be the improved onboard amenities such as additional leg room, improved food and beverage services, and the additional flexibility to use electronic equipment, conduct on-board business meetings or just relax and enjoy the ground level view. Also, rail service offers a benefit to business and other travelers desiring downtown-to-downtown service.

What will the noise and vibration levels be for high-speed passenger trains in comparison with freight trains?

Newer high-speed rail trains, similar to those that are being considered for use in the Midwest, have had their noise levels measured at between 76 and 80 decibels from a distance of 100 feet. This is less than both current conventional Amtrak trains and current freight equipment due to the advanced new train set technology, modernized and quieter locomotives, and the increased passing speed of the high-speed trains. High-speed trains will likely be six to eight cars in length and will be able to pass a particular location in a matter of a few seconds. They also would likely only pass a particular location once every two hours or so.

Continuous welded rail (CWR) and new ballast would be installed throughout all corridors. Both improvements will minimize train noise and vibrations. The installation of CWR will substantially reduce the noise effect from the track not only from passenger trains but also with existing freight trains. Additionally, the weight of new, high technology passenger train sets will be substantially lighter than current trains, further assisting to lower noise and vibration.

Where and how often will whistles be used? What does Indiana law say about whistle blowing in Indiana communities?

High-speed trains will have to comply with the same local, state and federal laws that freight railroads follow. Improvements proposed at crossings to allow for high-speed trains may qualify some crossings for “quiet zone” status. The Federal Railroad Administration is currently considering rules for the development of such zones. It is anticipated that the FRA’s rules will only allow quiet zones in areas where other safety improvements offset the elimination of an audible horn warning. The implementation of a quiet zone would eliminate the need for whistle blowing by both passenger trains and freight trains (with the exception of emergency situations).

Midwest Regional Rail System Characteristics Handout

Improved MWRRS Train Frequencies			
MWRRS Corridors	Number of Daily Trips per Direction*		
	MWRRS	Current Service	Increase in Trips
Chicago-Detroit	10	3	7
Chicago-Cleveland	8	3	5
Chicago-Cincinnati	6	1	5
Chicago-Carbondale	6	1	5
Chicago-St. Louis	10	3	7
St. Louis-Kansas City	4	2	2
Chicago-Omaha	4	0	4
Chicago-Twin Cities	6	1	5
Chicago-Milwaukee	14	6	8

Improved MWRRS Travel Times			
MWRRS Corridors	Train Travel Times		
	MWRRS	Current Service	Reduction in Travel Time
Chicago-Detroit	3 hrs 41 min	5 hrs 46 min	2 hrs 5 min
Chicago-Cleveland	3 hrs 46 min	6 hrs 32 min	2 hrs 48 min
Chicago-Cincinnati	4 hrs 9 min	8 hrs 48 min	4 hrs 39 min
Chicago-Carbondale	3 hrs 46 min	5 hrs 34 min	1 hr 18 min
Chicago-St. Louis	3 hrs 42 min	5 hrs 45 min	2 hrs 3 min
St. Louis-Kansas City	4 hrs 10 min	5 hrs 31 min	1 hr 21 min
Chicago-Omaha	7 hrs 11 min	9 hrs 11 min	2 hrs 0 min
Chicago-Twin Cities	5 hrs 42 min	7 hrs 56 min	2 hrs 14 min
Chicago-Milwaukee	1 hr 5 min	1 hr 32 min	0 hrs 27 min

Passenger Rail Service Comparison (Roundtrips)		
MWRRS Corridors	Current Amtrak Service	Fully Implemented MWRRS
Chicago-Cleveland	3*	8*
Chicago-Toledo	3*	8*
Toledo-Cleveland	3*	9*
Chicago-Cincinnati	1*	5*
Chicago-Indianapolis	2*	6*
Indianapolis-Cincinnati	1	6**
Chicago-St.Louis	3*	9*
Chicago-Joliet	3*	9*
Joliet-Springfield	3*	9*
Springfield-St.Louis	3*	9*
St. Louis-Kansas City	2	6
St. Louis-Kansas City	2	6
* Includes Amtrak long-distance trains ** MWRRS route differs from current Amtrak Service		

Passenger Rail Service Comparison (Roundtrips)		
MWRRS Corridors	Current Amtrak Service	Fully Implemented MWRRS
Chicago-Detroit	3	9
Chicago-Kalamazoo/Niles	4*	10*
Kalamazoo/Niles-Ann Arbor	3	9
Ann Arbor-Detroit	3	9
Kalamazoo-Port Huron	1*	4*
Kalamazoo-Holland	0	4
Detroit-Pontiac	3	4
* Includes Amtrak long-distance trains		

Passenger Rail Service Comparison (Roundtrips)

MWRRS Corridors	Current Amtrak Service	Fully Implemented MWRRS
Chicago-Quincy	1	4
Chicago-Omaha	1	4**
Chicago-Princeton	3*	9*
Chicago-Rock Island	0	5
Rock Island-Iowa City	0	5
Iowa City-Des Moines	0	5
Des Moines-Omaha	0	4

* Includes Amtrak long-distance trains

** MWRRS route differs from current Amtrak Service

Passenger Rail Service Comparison (Roundtrips)

MWRRS Corridors	Current Amtrak Service	Fully Implemented MWRRS
Chicago-Twin Cities	1*	7*
Chicago-Milwaukee	7*	17*
Milwaukee-Madison	0	10*
Madison-St. Paul	0	6
Milwaukee-Green Bay	0	5

* Includes Amtrak long-distance trains

Summary of Station and On-board Amenities	
Access/Egress and Other Travel Improvements	
Internal Station Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passenger-oriented - Restaurant, convenience, basic business services - ADA compliant
Train-to-train and Train-to-other mode Transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved signage at stations - Improved on-board announcements - On-line update status of train arrivals and departures
Station Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taxi and limousine services - Rental car service - Telephone link to transportation services
Airport Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intermodal links to airports - Stations at selected airports, e.g., Cleveland, General Mitchell, Peotone
Bus Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connecting to feeder buses dedicated to the MWRRS - Increased frequencies on existing bus networks and coordinated bus and rail schedules

Summary of Station and On-board Amenities	
Station Services	
Weather protected Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All platforms adjacent to stations or shelters
Station Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved internal and external appearance of all stations
Business, Food and Retail Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choice of type and quality of food - Restaurants and food courts at larger stations - Specialty shopping, business support services, and entertainment facilities at larger stations

Summary of Station and On-board Amenities

On-board Amenities

Business, Food, and Retail Services

- Fax and telephone communications
- Coffee / food carts
- Power and modem hook-ups at each seat
- Business-style seating bays (two-by-two)

Seating and Entertainment

- Open seating
- Airline-type business class seating
- Audiovisual monitors at seats for news, entertainment and information programs